NATIONAL
NGLTF
GAY & LESBIAN
TASK FORCE

2320 17th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20009

contact: Beth Barrett
(202) 332-6483 ext. 3215
bbarrett@ngltf.org

PRESS STATEMENT

NGLTF STATEMENT ON THE AMENDMENT 2 SUPREME COURT ARGUMENT AND THE "UNDO 2" DAY OF ACTION

Washington, DC -- October 10, 1995 -- Following are the remarks of Kerry Lobel, Deputy Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, delivered at a media briefing at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Washington, DC office. The post-argument media briefing on the US Supreme Court's review of Colorado's anti-gay measure was sponsored by the ACLU. For additional information on the briefing, please contact the ACLU at 202-675-2312 or 212-944-9800, ext. 424.
****

My name is Kerry Lobel, deputy director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Yesterday activists from 36 cities and towns across the nation gathered for vigils, rallies, press conferences and teach-ins to raise awareness of the dangerous nature of Colorado's Amendment 2 -- whose fate will be decided over the next few months by US Supreme Court Justices.

As a part of a nation-wide "UNDO 2 Day of Action" coordinated by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, activists from Anchorage to Tampa Bay came together yesterday because we share a common principle. We believe that the equality of a minority must not be held hostage to the prejudice of the majority. If Amendment 2 is allowed to stand, civil rights for all Americans are jeopardized. Last night we gathered to call on Americans of conscience to stand with us to remove this special barrier against basic equal rights.

Today, the spotlight is on the plaintiffs, the attorneys and the Supreme Court Justices. Meanwhile, the impact of this case will be felt by millions of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans and our allies who hope that the Supreme Court will not give the green light to special barriers that curb democratic access for some citizens.

Since before Amendment 2 was passed in 1992, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force has helped activists fight these measures around the country. We have traveled more than 150,000 miles to some 30 states and 50 cities to assist in the fight against these anti-gay ballot initiatives. In fact, as I speak today, NGLTF staff is in Maine working to defeat an initiative on the November ballot, the latest salvo from the Radical Right in its quest to deny gay, lesbian and bisexual Americans our basic right to live free from discrimination.

Our experience in the field tells us that the center of gravity in this battle is at the state and local level, where Amendment 2 and other measures are tested and advanced. We know that a ruling in this case will have a dramatic political and symbolic impact on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans.

Amendment 2 would change the playing field for lesbian, gay and bisexual Coloradans by creating different political rules just for them, excluding gay people from equal protection in the democratic process. In our system of government, citizens have the right to lobby their lawmakers for basic protection from discrimination. Amendment 2 would change that by creating a special barrier only for gay people, requiring a constitutional amendment for any change in laws.

Because Amendment 2 is so outrageous, we are confident that the US Supreme Court will agree with the State Supreme Court which struck down Amendment 2 as unconstitutional. Regardless of the personal politics of any of the nine justices who will decide the fate of Amendment 2, legal principle alone must guide the justices to hand down a decision that will UNDO 2 once and for all.

Even with this victory behind us, the battle for equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans will carry on. Without a federal civil rights law providing gay people basic protection from discrimination, Americans in 41 states still live with the fear that they might lose their jobs, their homes or their families because they have chosen to live honestly as themselves.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual Americans want equal rights – nothing more, nothing less. Amendment 2 singles out gay people for special discrimination. Because our freedom is not won or lost at the Supreme Court, we must never rest until we win the battle for equal rights for all Americans.